



Higher education, researches and role of the university

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Abstract

Higher education in India is undergoing a transformation. The reason for transformation is mainly due to the expansion of higher education in India and new demands on the system. Education has always considered as major instrument to achieve the objective of social, economic and political development of a nation. Higher education provides leadership by supplying a well developed human resource which ultimately takes the responsibility of operating the systematic developments in India. It is also rightly said that "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought." Research plays a very important role in the modern educational development. Hence, this paper highlights the role of the universities in promoting researches in their affiliated colleges in Assam.

Keywords : Higher education, research, university

1. Introduction

Educational system has always been expected to play a prominent role in shaping the future of any nation. Operating in a society where several other sub-systems are at play, the educational system would influence and in turn be influenced by these. This implies that political, economic and social development of any nation would seek the cooperation of education. In societies under the impact of science and technological developments, a complexity in living conditions cannot be over looked. To cope with these complexities, education is expected to develop in man a repertoire of skills and activities. A sound liberal and professional education is an endeavor in this direction. In this context, higher education assumes an important role to respond continuously to the new demand which is taking place during the rapid transformation of societies with regard to economic, cultural, social and other aspects. In a country rooted

in a philosophy of democratic socialism, the effective management of the above stated role would necessitate that the educational system, particularly at higher education level, would need to be democratized. Higher education, with such a philosophy shall have to function through certain institutions which would be solely concerned with the fulfillment to specific objectives reflecting the democratic philosophy.

These institutions are the Universities. The Universities have always believed to be the way of providing the needed leadership. The Universities have, therefore, been set up not only to keep the society for which they exist moving but there are many ways, by which universities could play a dynamic role in helping in a large measure to deal with emergency problems which characterize the process of change in a developing society. The role may be emphasized, becomes a highly differentiated one, due to the fact

that problems in a developing country are unique due to their very nature and therefore, solutions to these problems shall have to be made more intelligently and objectively in the light of conditions prevailing at specific points in time. While participating in these activities, traditionally the Universities make continuous and sustained efforts in three major dimensions viz- teaching, research and extension work. At this juncture it is to be mentioned that teaching in universities/colleges plays a significant role with its various sub-systems viz-courses of study (curricular), method of teaching and evaluation. The Synchronization of courses of study, methods of teaching and evaluation would be a great extent, governed by the consideration as to whether the evaluation is to be made summative or formatively. These academic objectives of a university have to be seen in a changing context of national development programmes in all walks of life. There is no gain saying fact that, teaching in universities play a significant role in fulfilling the function but for creativity and frontiers of knowledge, researches also go hand in hand with the teaching.

2. Analysis

Any research activity whether science, humanities or social science by definition is a kind of activity aimed at solving certain problems. For example if we take up the area of educational research, the rationale will remind its contributions to make decision-making process scientifically sound and educationally most responsive to the needs of human development and social progress with the identified areas like curriculum, teaching, technology of teaching, educational management, social impacts on education etc. By nature, education and its process are intimately related to individual development and social progress and therefore, any educational research has to clarify the perspective in terms of (1) why educational research (2) what are the constraints involved in the process and (3) what is the appropriate methodology to be adopted.

Research in any area of discipline needs careful, critical and exhaustive investigations to discover new facts which will test a hypothesis revise and accepted conclusions or contribute positive values society in general. It needs guidelines in the research procedure. A beginner in research may have to undertake an intellectual reorganization so as to interpret his field of specialization in the form of problems to be solved. The problems must be such that, research could be conducted with the available facilities. Once a problem is selected, actual research work should not begin until a good judgment on its practical or utilitarian significance is obtained.

The formulation of research is the blue print of

any research work. The blue print need the following heads which are essential for any scientific research work, (1) statement of the problem, (2) review of the related literature, (3) definition, (4) delimitation (5) hypothesis, (6) sample, (7) collection of data,(9) interpretation of the data, and (10) report writing.

Research is not merely a gathering and correlation of facts. It is always associated with an inquiring attitude of mind. As the Radhakrishan Commission said, "No one is fit to do his work whose mind cased to wonder and whose intellect stopped from questioning". If this is recognized, we do not find a sharp dichotomy between research and teaching. One should look upon both as methods of learning and important activities supplementing but not supplanting each other.

As their relationship is not properly understood, we make the mistake of isolation research and divorcing it from teaching. But in any sound or viable system of higher education, teaching and research should be regarded as the systole and diastole of the heart. Therefore, when a faculty member stays abreast of the latest developments in his field, he will be able to improve his teaching.

Assam is the heartland of the North East India. Nested with enchanting green hills, wild life, the legendary "Pragyotishpur" is the gateway to the North East India. It is the most populated and second largest state in the far-flung region.

Higher Education was a late comer in the NE India, the then undivided Assam. The first higher educational institutions i.e. Cotton College, the premier institutions of higher education of NE India was established on 27th may 1901. Before the establishment of the Cotton College, till the middle of the 19th Century Assam did not enjoy any higher education facilities. But since independence, in the last 64 years, Higher Educational Institutions expended enormously i.e. Universities from zero to nine colleges from six to three and fifty, one IIT, one NIT, one IIE and other professional institutions. In spite of the phenomenal growth of higher education in Assam, it is very disheartening to observe that the standard of higher education is declining and which is affecting the quality of education in the state. Hence, researchers particularly the educational researchers should reach the unreached and research the unresearched remote and neglected areas of Assam. It is believed that research is an effective instrument for growth and change but due to certain factors, for e.g., political, social, ethical, psychological, economic and many more miscellaneous problems posed as hindrance in meeting the demands of the century. Problems of higher education become the problem of research automatically. Hence, at this juncture the role

of the universities of Assam becomes very important. So the main objective of the paper is to study the role of the universities in promoting researches in their affiliated colleges.

In the light of the above discussion, the role of the universities of Assam in promoting researches in its affiliated colleges needs a careful reading. Presently, Assam is having six universities out of which two are state level, one Open University, two Central and the other one is an Agricultural University. The total responsibility of progress in science, technology, agriculture and humanities depend on the shoulders of these six universities. As it is very clear to all the conscious and alert Educationist and Scientist that there are different types of Universities viz, unitary, teaching and affiliated universities which

cover state, central, deemed, agricultural and technological institutions. It may be mentioned that the affiliated universities have some special features namely, that the teaching is conducted in the affiliated colleges and the examinations are conducted by the universities. Teaching at the undergraduate stage is mainly the responsibility of the affiliated colleges. The affiliated colleges under Gauhati, Dibrugarh and Assam University are functioning with a large number of colleges. The affiliated colleges under these universities have mainly three sections-arts, science and commerce with limited and unlimited number of students situated in the urban rural areas of Assam. Recently in 2011 (December) Government of Assam promoted the century old premier Cotton College to unitary University along with Cotton College as constituent College.

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| Sl No | Name of the University | No of affiliated colleges | Category | National important Institutions |
|-------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|---|
| 1. | Gauhati University | 183 | State | Indian Institute of Technology |
| 2. | Dibrugarh University | 153 | State | National Institute of Technology |
| 3. | Assam University | 51 | Central | Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship |
| 4. | Tezpur University | ----- | Central | NEIS(formerly RRL) |
| 5. | Assam Agricultural University | 5 | State | Central Institute of Technology Kokrajhar |
| 6. | K.K.Handique State Open University | ----- | State | |
| 7. | Assam Donbosco University | ----- | Private | |
| 8. | Cotton University | ----- | Unitary | |

The actual picture of the official and teaching staff differs from college to college. Colleges situated in the urban areas have better physical facilities than the programme undertaken from UGC does not differ among the rural colleges. The teaching staff of both the category of the colleges must have the requisite qualifications. NET, SLET or Ph.D degree has become, a must for college requirements as directed by UGC, the field of research activities has taken a new turn. Its main aim is no doubt to get qualitative improvement of the college teachers. At this juncture, the three affiliating universities of Assam are to contribute research for the national development. They should train the teachers in a research oriented way with cooperation among the variety of disciplines for solving different problems. In comparison to the advanced universities of India, Assam is still in its initial stage. The universities, the affiliated colleges and its incumbents have a great role to play in this respect. These universities should extent its helping

hand to the researchers in such a way so that a teacher can avail the maximum benefit out of it. The interested teachers of affiliated colleges should be extended all the possible help in their pursuit of research activities. In this respect provision should be made elaborately to give facilities of guide ship to post graduate department teachers as research guide from the affiliated colleges. To create an atmosphere in preliminary and advanced level research methodology, seminars, workshops should be arranged by the innovators of the universities. More of such seminars etc will culture the minds of the college teachers as they can meet and exchange their ideas among themselves. The universities should take extra care to intimate the affiliated colleges in advance about the national seminars, symposium etc. It will help the interested teachers to prepare for such seminars etc. and attend it. There should be some special provision for college teachers including financial grant to facilitate them to attend the national seminars. Again

there should be some instructions from the government as well as from the universities to the affiliated colleges to allow the interested teachers with pay and duty leave to attend such seminars etc. and a report should be made available to the concerned authority. While assessing a teacher's efficiency this should be taken into consideration. This involvement will create an atmosphere to widen their knowledge, outlook and acceptance of innovative methodology and also it will discourage the biasness of the different governing bodies. The universities can take up a few short term or long term research project with the help of the postgraduate teachers and the teachers of the affiliated colleges. It can be made in an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary approach of research will help the universities to make a congenial relationship among different departments and different colleges. In this respect the post graduate teachers can extend their maximum help to the affiliated college teachers. Another most important phenomenon is the establishments of Centers of Advanced Studies in different subjects for effective and modern research in the state of Assam. At present many of the Indian Universities have already acquired the facilities to function the centers of Advanced Studies attached with the postgraduate departments for creative works. This will lead to scientific research in the state. Assam's universities are in a developing stage and they are yet to achieve the final goal. The circumstances demand more involvement of both the universities with organizations like ICSSR, ICHR, ICAR, CSIR and UGC etc as they are the suppliers of the financial machineries for the educational institutions. Here it is to be mentioned that the role of UGC in the financial assistance towards teachers is very positive and encouraging.

3. Challenges of the Hour

The first and foremost requirement in revamping researchers mainly, the Educational Researches in Assam is to reorient the teachers and the research guides through a massive and rigorous

orientation programme.

The universities (state level) of Assam may select the priority areas, selecting and preparing tools and techniques, using software packages for analysis and interpreting results, face to face presentation session etc.

The eligibility conditions for research supervisor should be made more stiff and stringent. For the Research guides, publication of research articles in International (at least two) and national (at least five) level journal should be made mandatory. Research Supervisors' speciality is essential and registration of research topic should be in accordance with the supervisors' speciality.

On the other hand, every research scholar must publish three research papers before submission of Ph.D. Thesis and two papers before viva voce examination. Publication of research work in the form of the book by the university or by private publishers should be encouraged.

Universities should be conscious about the duplication of research works. Therefore, universities must publish the registered topics of the researches through their websites for quality research work.

Conclusion Last but not the least, an all out effort should come forward to accommodate the broad based research activities giving more importance to in-depth and intensive studies which will cater the need of the country in general and Assam in particular. Let us wait to achieve the goal of the 21st century for a knowledgeable society. In this connection, the National Knowledge Commission, 2005's recommendation on expansion of higher education is quite relevant in Assam. NKC suggested converting the better performing autonomous colleges in separate universities but till today Assam is yet to have a single autonomous college. Definitely these suggestions will pave the path for better knowledgeable higher education with more research facilities in the affiliated colleges of Assam.

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